
INTRODUCTION

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The purpose of land use planning for the Leesburg area is to provide a guide to aid citizens and government officials in making the difficult choices that will define how the area will grow in the foreseeable future. The Leesburg Area Management Plan analyzes the existing land use issues and provides a plan for both conservation and development that will retain the area's unique assets for the enjoyment of future generations, while permitting substantial, orderly expansion around the Town.

The Leesburg area is at a crossroads. The Town of Leesburg anticipates an increase in both residential and non-residential growth in the next decade. The County is committed to managed growth of public facilities (i.e., schools, sewer and water, roads, recreation, etc.) and to residential growth taking place within a context of environmental sensitivity. The basic land use issues that are critical to such managed growth are:

1. Growth Rate: How and when will the area accommodate residential growth and at what density?
2. Urban Design: How should new residential and commercial areas be organized in terms of size, scale and location in order to be compatible with the historic character of the Town and County?
3. Public Facilities: How, when and where will public investments be programmed?
4. Industrial and Commercial Growth: How and where will the area accommodate new industrial and commercial growth?
5. Agricultural Preservation: How should the agricultural industry in the area be preserved?
6. Environmental Integrity: How will the significant environmental features of the area be managed?
7. Transportation: How can the existing and future transportation network meet the demands of the future?

These issues all require care in balancing the potential conflicts generated by growth and its costs with the development philosophy expressed in the Resource Management Plan. That plan's policy explicitly promotes growth, when it occurs, to take place around existing village or town centers throughout the County in order to centralize public services (schools, sewer and water extensions, etc.) within identifiable growth center limits. As a method of implementing this important policy, an Urban Limit Line (urban growth boundary) has been recommended that will control the extension of public facilities (schools, sewer lines, etc.) by declaring property external to the line as limited in growth potential.

The Leesburg Area Management Plan recommends the most logical land use and growth pattern for the Leesburg area within the Plan's time frame of ten years. This plan has been compiled to ensure harmonious growth commensurate with the health, safety and welfare of the area's residents.

A recurring concern throughout the preparation of the Leesburg Area Management Plan has been the annexation of additional land by the Town of Leesburg. Such annexation would remove from the County the ability to manage growth in the area subject to annexation and could severely constrict the rural land management programs. There have been vocal proponents as well as opponents to the issue of whether an appropriate annexation area should be included in this plan. In addition, on March 10, 1982 the Town passed a resolution calling for the annexation of some 15.3 square miles of this study area. This proposal would extend the current Town limits well beyond the recommended Urban Limit Line to include not only the Balls Bluff National Cemetery to the north but also to include approximately one-half of the Sycolin watershed to the south. Because annexation involves issues beyond those addressed in this plan, no formal position or recommendation will be made with regard to what area might be appropriate for annexation other than to state that the proposed area outside of the recommended Urban Limit Line is clearly inappropriate for municipal jurisdiction and that the areas within the ULL should only be annexed subsequent to their development under the County's Comprehensive Plan and Zoning Ordinance. However, because any decision with regard to annexation will affect the delicate balancing of the competing land use issues discussed in this plan, the discussions, suggestions and recommendations contained herein should be followed in developing the County's position with regard to the Town's proposed annexation. Regardless of how the annexation issue is resolved, it is recommended that the land within the Leesburg Planning Area be developed in accordance with the recommendations contained in the County's Comprehensive Plan and Zoning Ordinance.

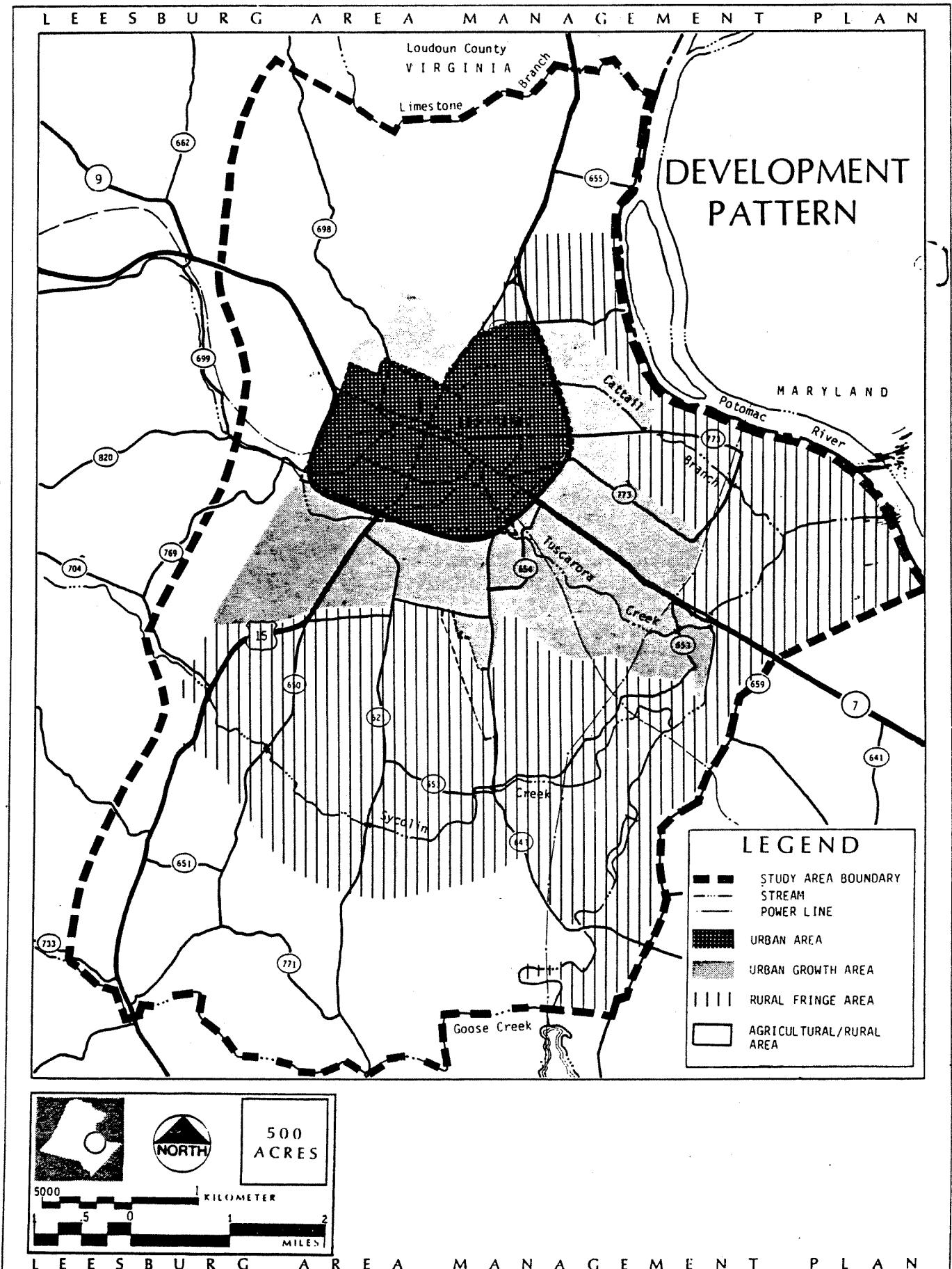
A major recommendation of the Plan is the implementation of an Urban Growth Area where development would be of higher density and served by public facilities in contrast with the rural areas of farms and large residential lots served by wells and septic systems. The limits of this urban growth would be established by an Urban Limit Line. (See Figure 1, page iv). The Urban Limit Line (ULL) is the geographical boundary that clearly distinguishes the more urban oriented areas (Town of Leesburg and its immediate environs) from the rurally based (farm) community. Basic to the Resource Management Plan is the tenet that new development would locate around the more urban areas where public facilities are available at the least public cost. The concept of the Urban Limit Line represents the specific implementation technique of the RMP that promotes residential and non-residential growth around designated urban growth centers (towns, villages). Figure 1, page iv defines the general growth areas for the planning area.

Many criteria were used in developing the Urban Growth Area and the Urban Limit Line. The basic criteria regarding the ULL were:

1. Proximity to the Town of Leesburg
2. Existing and proposed zoning districts
3. Watershed boundaries surrounding the Town
4. Gravity sewer service potential
5. Existing and proposed location of public facilities (i.e., schools, road improvements, recreation and other Capital Improvements Program items)

The definition of the Urban Limit Line is that point in the planning area which separates an urban development area with sewer service from a rural development area where no sewer service is planned over the anticipated 10 year life of the Plan. Future urban facilities (CIP items) will be concentrated within the Urban Growth Area (see Figure 1, page iv) to limit dispersion of residential and non-residential growth to areas where premature development will hinder the effective implementation of the RMP. New development (residential and non-residential) within the Urban Limit Line should pay its fair share of public costs for necessary facilities. The Town of Leesburg should support the Leesburg Area Management Plan and its recommendation to promote the reduction of capital costs. The planning and zoning process should secure required dedications and improvements to public facilities to provide a full range of amenities and facilities at lowest public cost. The density transfer program should be used by the Town of Leesburg whenever possible.

FIGURE 1



The Leesburg Area Planning Process

The specific purpose of the Leesburg Area Management Plan is to provide a detailed basis for implementation of the Resource Management Plan (RMP) on a local level. The RMP was adopted on the premise that the valued resources of the County could be saved for future generations and that growth, when it occurs, should take place in areas around existing communities. To implement this growth policy, the RMP encouraged increased levels of growth around towns and residential community centers, given the concurrence of the local citizens.*

To achieve this end, the Leesburg area planning process was divided into two stages. The first stage was the "Issues and Options Report" which was designed to make explicit the difficult land use issues facing the Town and County and to sketch alternative plan options which could provide a framework for detailed land use plans. The Town of Leesburg's staff reviewed the "Issues and Options Report" and substantive changes were made in the document. The report was reviewed by the citizens' Leesburg Area Planning Committee; goals for the area were adopted and strategies reviewed by its various subcommittees. From these goals and strategies, a draft strategy plan was drawn up as the first step in Part II of the planning process. This was the basis of the Plan compiled by the Planning Commission and adopted by the Board of Supervisors on November 1, 1982.

* Loudoun County Resource Management Plan (adopted May 21, 1979),
page 219